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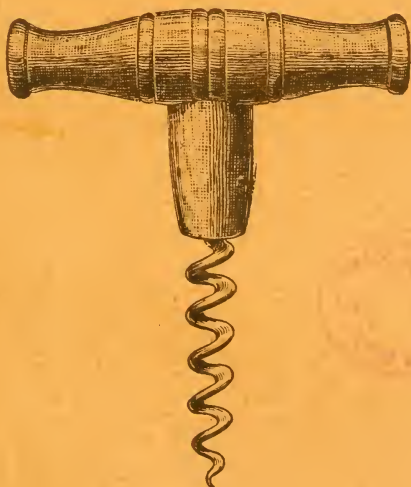


PRICE 25 CENTS.

HARDSCRABBLE

BY

CHRISTOPHER



NEW YORK:
W. I. WHITING,
PUBLISHER.

HARDSCRABBLE;

OR,

BALLAD OF THE FREE LUNCH BAR.

BY

CHRISTOPHER CORKSCREW.



W. I. WHITING, 35-885-2!

PUBLISHER,

27 BEAVER STREET, NEW YORK.

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BY

W. I. WHITING.

DEDICATION.

To the army of tramps who are pounding the earth,
The lame, and the lazy, in all sorts of weather,
Who think with a sigh of the day of their birth,
So hard to keep soul and the body together,

To you these few lines, without hoping for gain,
I feelingly dedicate, with the warm wish,
That when a kind Heaven good porridge doth rain,
We may not be found with a bottom-up dish.

Yet, if fame is wind, as the moralists say,
It must be apparent, without any doubt,
The reverse will hold good, hence meet us what may,
We're sure of high honors when beating about.

Philosophers argue each station hath charms.
Who knows but to fortune we yet may be debtor;
As things are, mutability hath no alarms,
For come any change, it must surely come better.

PREFACE.

A dedication to tramps will perhaps be considered by some *Infra dig.*, but in the words of the great Garrick, "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," and I am free to admit, that in the hard battle of life my sympathies are with the under dog. But whatever views may be taken, I cannot be charged with sycophancy, desire for social position, political preferment, nor with mercenary motives—all of which in these obsequious, degenerate and designing days should count in my favor.

As regards the choice of a subject, my motive is akin to the muscular minister's who knocked down an insulting pugilist, with whom he had an altercation, and excused himself by saying, "I thought best to address him in language he would be most likely to understand," and on this present occasion—

In these blooming days of nature,
These indigo days of business,

there is scarcely any subject that comes so near to us all as free lunches. Again, I am, so far as I know, the pioneer in this line of literature—the first to break ground in this rich and virgin soil. Of course we cannot tell for a certainty what designs this year's crop of spring poets may have upon a long-suffering and poetry

burdened world until the disbanding of Coxey's Army.* In this connection it may not be amiss to state that the census returns show 27,778 Ivory Soap poets alone, who tip their hats to Uncle Sam, which fact should set at rest the New York *Herald's* laudable solicitude, expressed in an article that appeared shortly after the lamented deaths of Whitman and Whittier, as to who would be the sweet singers of the future.

27,778

to sing the praises of soap and not one to strike his lyre in thankfulness for free lunches! Boys! Oh, Boys! can ingratitude go further! It is proper for me to state some of the following pictures are from a group gathered in that Minerva-like city, Chicago, where most of this was written, and where the scene is laid. Others picked up in New York.

W. I. WHITING.

NEW YORK, May, 1894.

* The tramping of Gen. Coxey and his tatterdemalion army from the West to Washington, through mire and misery, and encountering rivers and ridicule, was exceeded in its originality only by its ludicrousness.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The following that I now have the honor of presenting to your notice is no one-horse circus and crippled menagerie, which after weary wanderings and unremunerative exhibitions is reduced to manager, clown, bearded woman, flying monkeys, and trick mule. No, it now for the first time takes the road; the canvas is for the first time spread to re-echo the plaudits or derision of a twenty-five cent critical community and the "animiles."

In all their wide variety of woe,
In all their sweet simplicity of manners,
And in all their deep thankfulness of soul,
Mander round the ring, still redolent of fresh sawdust.

O ye who think great poets all are dead,
And none again old Pegasus will straddle,
Hope will awake, when to the end you've read,
The great sensation of the day—HARDSCRABBLE.

HARDSCRABBLE ;

OR,

BALLAD OF THE FREE LUNCH BAR.

“This world is like a crowded car;
Some favored few, perhaps,
Can get a seat, but most of us
Must hang on by the straps.”

—*Manhattan Idylls.*

We may live without poetry, music, and art,
We may live without conscience, and live without heart,
We may live without friends, we may live without books,
But civilized man cannot live without cooks!

—*Lucile.**

Give ear to my story, for now do I find
A saying of Sancho's† in memory's keeping:
“May blessings attend him, the best of mankind,
Who was first the inventor of sleeping.”

Tho' my saying, like Sancho's, may never endure,
Yet in loud, thankful strains I will sing it afar;
Every blessing be his—he deserves them, I'm sure—
The saint who invented the free lunching bar.

* Handsome copies of this popular poem from 25c. to \$2.

† Don Quixote, from 35c. to \$4.

When the glory of earth's great inventions grow dim,
 To the weary and worn it will shine a fixed star,
 This genuine blessing that cometh from him—
 The saint who invented the free lunching bar.

O Holy St. Peter! when this life-saving mortal,
 Or sooner or later, leaves this world of sin,
 And seeks for admission at thy sacred portal,
 Suspend all your questions and pass him straight in.

When everything's "busted" on which we have
 "banked,"
 And to our down-sinking there cometh no rally,
 When our "ready" hath been by the pool-sellers
 "yanked,"
 Who nightly do business in Beelzebub* alley.

When "bucking de tiger," with clock automatic,
 Whose fast-holding hands scarcely err in their mission,
 Our ventures are "knocked" by its movements erratic.
 If "puts," "calls," or "straddles," straight away to
 perdition.

When "long" of the market, if slaughtering bruin
 Doth level our castle with speedy disaster,
 If "short," when the bovine doth show by our ruin
 No sweet pity lives with the merciless master.

When those who loud boasted of friendship's strong tie,
 Declaring our welfare was big at their heart,
 But who only had on our pocket an eye,
 And played in their dealings a shysterer's part.

* Running, if my memory serves me, from Clark Street; largely given up, or was, to poolrooms, bucket shops, automatic clocks, and all facilities for "playing the races," etc. I arrived in Chicago Sunday morning, and next day discovered what I have called Beelzebub Alley, not knowing its proper name.

When the specie, it once was our pleasure to share,
 Like friends in rejoicing, has wandered afar,
 When smote by the cyclone of want, and despair,
 How sweet to our vision the free lunching bar.

When pursued by that vixen, a stranger to pity,
 Whose only delight is to torture and tear,
 An oasis remains in the big bustling city.
 It blooms, where a free lunch the stranded may share.

When struck with religion, the truant wife goes
 To howl hallelujah at camp of salvation,
 The breadwinner wanders where garish light throws
 A glory around this bright spot of creation.

The knife that hath pierced the *strong* breath of the
 eaters,
 When tramps in their greed drove it in to the handle,
 The food where have circuss'd the flies and mosquitoes,
 Looks tempting when viewed o'er by gaslight or
 candle.

Ye writers of fiction, why journey afar
 To people your pages in distant locality?
 Like sere leaves of autumn, here characters are,
 In motley profusion, and somber reality.

When "pulpit drum" * beating, the preacher no more
 Exhorts fallen man to forsake his wild ways,
 When loosed from the moorings that held him 'of yore,
 To the sweet saving grace of a free lunch he strays.

When the doctor hath seen all his patients laid low,
 Who his medicine took as the label directed,
 Ten to one you will find him augmenting the "show"
 Where the "lay out" of poultry is quickly dissected.

* When pulpit drum, ecclesiastic,
 Was beat with a hand instead of a stick.

When lawyers no more are expounding the laws,
 Some rogues to assist, others guarding from harm,
 Nor judges "stand in" with a fraudulent cause,
 "As aforesaid" *goose-picking* to them hath a charm.

He hath shone as a star and won plaudits from all;
 He is now a "back number," alas! the dark day!
 No more head and shoulders above like King Saul!*
 Here, star, stock, and audience all equal can play.

Let poets wax warm as they sing of the glory
 That classical Greece in her infancy knew;
 But search all the pages of Homer's† great story,
 And not a free lunch bar doth rise to our view.

When from the Imperial her eagles did soar,
 With the swiftness of lightning, the strength of the
 gale,
 Search the eloquent pages of Gibbon‡ all o'er,
 No free lunch is there to adorn the great tale.

With Virgil,§ and Dante, seek Pluto's domain;
 What horrors they picture, what wonders they tell!
 Admit it you must when you view earth again;
 In the way of free lunches Chicago beats h—ll.

* I Samuel, x. 23. Fine assortment Bibles—large books, small price; largest 19 lbs. and full of salvation.

† Pope's Homer, 75c. The greatest feast ever placed before a literary stomach. Read Pope's translation, "First, last, and all the time." I have probably the finest edition of Pope's works in America, price \$250.

‡ Gibbon's Rome, fine set, \$2.50.

§ Virgil and Dante, 75c. each, and Dryden's Poems, 25c.; pub., 60c.

Go read with attention his wonderful pages,
 Who Hamlet* created, Macbeth, and Iago;
 The peer of all poets, the king of all sages,
 But Falstaff ne'er knew the free lunch of Chicago.

When that sturdy sea-captain, brave Christopher, † came
 And the veil drew aside that concealed half the world,
 Deep writing on History's page his great name,
 And the cross-bearing standard in triumph unfurled.

To that power low-bending whose strong arm defended,
 Through days of long watching and peril's dark night,
 But with added fervor his thanks had ascended,
 Had the "spread" of our day cheered the wanderer's
 sight.

Talk of sentences silver, and words that are golden,
 They all have some dross, here and those purest gold
 When spoken to one who hath scarcely beholden
 A good square meal lately, "fall to," or "lay hold."

The silver-tongued orator charming mankind
 Ne'er made a more eloquent speech, tho' 'tis brief,
 Than when the bartender asks, are you inclined
 For more chicken salad, boned turkey, and beef?

Demosthenes, Cicero, Sheridan, Burke,
 In that world-renowned trial ‡ where spellbound all
 sat;
 Lord Chatham, great Webster § in his grandest work,
 Are all idle ravings when measured with that.

* Shakespeare, bound, from 35c. to \$10.

† With Columbus in America, ill., cut from 75c. to 25c.

‡ Impeachment of Warren Hastings; fine set Macaulay's
 Essays, 3 vols., 50c. each.

§ Reply to Hayne, and Webster's Life, 50c.

When the swift wheel of time finds the race-runner
 stranded,
 For fortune not always on turf-banners perch,
 But if in his fall at a free lunch is landed,
 Tho' left in the "soup" he's not left in the lurch.

Whatever goes up is as sure to come down—
 A saw, politicians find out to be true;
 And those who have ruled o'er the country or town
 "Thank the Lord" for free lunches, when ballots are
 few.

When Wall street no more is a well-spring of "boodle,"
 Gay brokers who erst washed their dinners with
 punches,
 When each lamb is sheared, and there comes no new
 noodle,
 Inspired by schooners* now joy in free lunches.

When the jury and court both sustain the fraud deal
 Of shystering brokers' base, bogus transaction,
 And scoop, sweat-stained specie to square the sure steal,
 The lunch bar then blooms with an added attraction.

When society's darling—but some might think dude
 Would fit that *rare*† specimen very much better,
 But here I would mention nor wish to be rude—
 They both are evolved from identical letter.

So be it, but where he no more leads the mazy,
 When favors are often nonsensical trash,
 And the season has made him for cash almost crazy,
 Hocks his dress suit with "Huncle" ‡ and comes here
 for hash.

* Good enough for them.

† Rare, underdone.

‡ I'm told the society suckers of New York, soon as the season closes, "hock" their dress suits, take an abridged edition of a hall room, "work" the free-lunch racket, and husband their resources for next winter's campaign.

Of all sights that show to the dude's vacant* stare,
 When his chronic shortness of rhino appals
 The brightest, when he doth perambulate where
 Aloft in their glory flame forth the three balls.

When his back load of gold has been all dumped in
 'Frisco,
 On wining and dining, and all pleasures there;
 When on chasing and racing his last dollars risk O,
 Not forgetting the summer, nor mid-winter fair.

When the "lay out" at "Grand" fills the miner no more,
 No more their† gold toothpicks all proudly doth
 flourish,
 Ere trudging again to the "diggings" of yore,
 For the long tramp his system at free lunch doth
 nourish.

How suave is the manner, how smooth is the speech,
 Of the bubble promoter, he's here without doubt;
 Unchecked by refusal, he'll stick like a leech,
 If you have the "yellow" and he finds it out.

With millions in sight for himself and all those
 Who invest in his fancies, but yet, Oh, but yet,
 When naught but the briars are left of the rose,
 The floater's fair form is found filling this set.

Behold the inventor! whose anticipation
 Shows horses, and houses, and treasures so vast,
 When time, the accoucheur, brings a still-born creation,
 Like all patent failures he comes here at last.

* I am led to believe New York is burdened to the square inch with more poverty-stricken, kid-gloved, cane-sucking, consequential, addle-pated specimens of humanity than any other place on God's earth.

† I am told gold toothpicks are given to guests in 'Frisco, while here they use kindling wood.

Far and wide o'er the world it had been his to roam,
 All sciences knew, and all tongues and all people;
 Ring the bell when you would the sage always was
 home—

His classic attainments rose high like the steeple.

“*Au fait*” in all customs that govern each “lay out”
 At home and abroad, and with lore and sincerity
 The same could unfold; but this game can “play out”
 With swiftness amazing, and wondrous dexterity.

When forth from God's country the Canuck doth roam,
 Allured by big dollars that fancy doth show—
 But finds not the three meals that cheered him at home,
 The lunch bar abridges his measure of woe.

When the old homestead kitchen no more glads the eye,
 Nor the deep-laden table can bring a relief;
 When thoughts of the past start the tear or the sigh
 Here is found by the exile a “joy in his grief.”

How often the dailies, our pleasure and pride,
 The world's great promoters of knowledge and right,
 Would fail in their good—as the universe wide—
 Did the free lunch no more glad the editor's sight.

The joy of the poet, ah! little we think!
 As we read and yawn over his freshly ground numbers,
 How oft he was rescued when nearing the brink
 From sinking untimely to silence and slumbers.

The “bust” banker's stay, he who knew not denial
 Ere her shadows black fortune did over him fling;
 The tramp's sweet Elysium in his dark day of trial,
 And hence all this folly I gratefully sing.

And let fate do her worst, she can ne'er “knock us out,”
 While the lunch bar is blooming with cold cut and
 splendor;

The saint knows it well, who goes homeless about,
 And the sinner who's been on a jolly old “bender.”

Ho! tramps of Chicago, of every degree,
Each one without money, and some without worth,
Let big thanks go upward, all fervent and free,
For "striking" the greatest food center on earth.

In song let it rise, ye conglomerate sinners,
For music, says musical Moore* ne'er betrays;
And when in sad wanderings we come short of dinners,
Remember the free lunch will cheer our dark days.

* Thus that delightful Irishman, that sweet singer of the Emerald Isle, Tom Moore:

"Music! oh, how faint, how weak,
Language fades before thy spell!
Why should feeling ever speak,
When thou canst breathe her soul so well?
Friendship's balmy words may feign,
Love's are e'en more false than they;
Oh! 'tis only music's strain
Can sweetly soothe, and not betray."

SONG.

Hail! brothers of this motley band!
 Our bodies full that erst were porous,
 All in the ring join hand in hand,
 And raise the song, and swell the chorus.

We've euchered fate, and conquered hate,
 O listen to our thankful ditty;
 And others too, the same can do,
 Who journey to Chicago City.

When fate, that cruel vixen, sought,
 To level shafts that seldom err,
 Pleased to destroy, she little thought
 That we would "get the drop" on her.

CHORUS.

Sure cased in steel that mortal stands,
 Fate's arrows cause no lasting harm;
 Howe'er for him doth run life's sands,
 Who can at free lunch "work" his arm.

CHORUS.

Ingratitude, the worst of crimes,
 Whatever comes we'll show it never,
 But loudly sing in rustic rhymes
 This life-saving station, boys, forever.

CHORUS.

L'ENVOI.

Gentle reader, if you
Have followed me through,
And pleased with the subject and measure,
'There is one beside,
Who is not denied,
Perhaps a more permanent pleasure.

But if no such feeling,
'Tis myself that's not squealing,
With your twenty-five cents in my pocket;
I'd rather have that,
'There's the truth for you flat,
Than any one's picture in locket.

For the present good-by,
But if later day I
Mount Peg. we will journey afar,
Being soothed and sustained,
By the strength we have gained,
So long at the free lurching bar.

Not "cribbed nor confined,"
I will loosen my mind,
So if with effort you're vexed,
Like a snow-storm in May
It will soon pass away,
But keep your "eye pceled" for the next.

As this is the season for selling
 Good books, shoddy gems, and all that,
 The following ads. will be telling
 My business, and "where I am at."

'Tis the talk of the town,
 By each wise one, and noodle,
 That books good, and cheap,
 Are more plenty than boodle,
 At Whiting's literary restaurant, 27 Beaver Street.

Cash buyers are wanted,
 And wanted real bad,
 To change the condition,
 And make the heart glad.

Then haste with your rhino,
 I humbly request;
 Walk in, books and prices
 Will quick do the rest.

You can judge just as well,
 By a Sabbath morn bell,
 What the preacher is going to say,
 As for certainty know
 The book treasures I show,
 By a glance at this sidewalk display.

This starvation* stand,
 That six feet doth expand,
 In this region of learning and love,

* When this was written I had a little shelf on the sidewalk on which to expose my treasures, but not being considered in "good form,"

No volumes now are placed to show
 The piles of books I have below.

Is but as one star
To the thousands that are
All shining in Heaven above.

But if seeing's believing,
You'll not depart grieving,
If enter and judge for yourselves,
That the half is not told,
You will say as of old,*
When you gaze on the deep-groaning shelves.

Nor long will you look,
Ere you buy books or book,
Induced by the price I will name;
And as you depart,
Say with thankful heart,
I'm glad to this Mecca I came.

And when to your wife,
The joy of your life,
You come, with the books old or new,
Her speech will be this,
As she plants a warm kiss,
What a darling dear hubby, R. U.
R. U.,
What a darling dear hubby R. U.

Done at the Mecca of the down-town literati, 27
Beaver Street.

* I Kings, x. 7.

The following was spiked on the gate, when leaving for God's Country:

Take notice all who seek this store,
 If fool or sage, if saint or sinner,
 I'm hastening to a distant shore,
 Where I can get a good square dinner;
 What Beaver Street to me denies,
 Was always mine 'neath St. John skies.

There, three meals daily were mine own;
 But now, O hear my plaintive ditty:
 No more for me the tables groan,
 Such Beaver * Street, in this great city,
 Hard work, poor fare, and no relief,
 While many a promised friend, turned thief.

Where boodlers go, there I am going,
 And cashiers who have lived too fast;
 Debtors, with creditors hard, showing
 An army various and vast,
 With all whose funds are in disorder,
 I'm skipping o'er the northern border.

Hope of the world, fair Canada!
 Thy *future bright with sure success*,
 Thy sons, and boodlers turn to thee,

* In answer to the question that may present itself to some why I did not remain where I was sure of three square meals daily, I may state that, having entered into a contract to labor in this *vineyard* until next spring, I considered it would be mean—and, as Byron says, “be anything but mean”—copies from 35c. to 75c.—to desert the boys in the present state of their intellectual development, even though my efforts in their behalf have not been rewarded with that liberality which the bankers and brokers of New York are popularly supposed to possess.

In all their days of deep distress;
 Yes, they who've starved, and they who've stole,
 All seek thee with a thankful soul.

Five years I've toiled, five years I've striven,
 Freely my lamp hath burned for all;
 Yet oft felt more like h—ll than heaven,
 To find the recompense so small,
 And learn that he who *here* sells books,
 Is barr'd from patronizing cooks.

* * * * *

'Tis more than strange, with such a stock,
 Where men* of letters do abound,
 That I should strike starvation rock,
 And be among the hungry found;
 Had I sold whisky, beer, or rum,†
 To such distress had never come.

Four hundred juicerics; all are thriving—‡
 Sure flows the golden stream to them—
 To one book store; yet with hard striving
 Disaster's wave can scarcely stem;
 When I began 'twas then I blundered—
 I should have joined the *quart—o* hundred.

* Men of letters, as Artemus Ward would say, might be considered sarcastical, but any one who for five years has seen, as I have, the loads of letters lugged by the lettermen, will not think the term misapplied.

† Oh, could they suck them through a straw,
 Or from the goblet drain,
 Not long my mammoth stock of books
 In cellar would remain.

‡ Prince Henry exclaimed, when they found a paper in Jack Falstaff's pocket, on which was 8s. 2d. for sack and ½d. for bread, "O, monstrous! but one halfpenny's worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack."

Mothers of Kingston,* daughters hear,
 Hungry I seek my childhood home.
 Oh! give me that substantial cheer,
 That oft you gave ere I did roam;
 Ah! meals by you, there's none can beat them,
 And I'm the "daisy" who can eat them.

Fathers of Kingston, sons attend,
 And freely let your pity flow;
 Like, yet unlike hath been your friend,
 To him who went from Jericho†
 After his thieves Samaritan,
 But I have never yet found one.

* * * * *

Yes, I was like the verdant boy,
 Who monkeyed with the vigorous mule,
 And what he thought would bring him joy,
 Proclaimed him an outrageous fool;
 "You'll not be handsome as before,"
 Says dad, "but you will know far more."

But such is life; some up, some down,
 Some play the fool, and some the sage,
 Some act the king, and some the clown,
 And such hath been in every age;
 But come what may, oh! never fret,
 But pray you may be happy yet.

* Kingston, about eighteen miles from St. John; settled in 1783 by good old George III. Loyalists erected the first church in the province, the centennial of which was duly celebrated in June, 1889, and the people still retain their devotion to Heaven, and their loyalty to the Crown, pure, as their running streams, strong as their rock ribb'd hills.

† St. Luke, x. 30.

Kittens, good-by; go not astray,
Nor jump on any other's shoulder;
When next your fair forms cheer my day,
You'll be a week or ten days older.
William will daily serve you meat,
Share with your mother when you eat.

Done at the Hardscrabble Book
Store, 27 Beaver Street, Sunday,
August 12, 1894, in presence of
the aforesaid kittens.

W. I. WHITING.

BOOKS.

Companions, friends, wherein we daily find
 The choicest treasures of the human mind;
 True wisdom to expand and living mirth
 To fringe with flowers the thorny paths of earth;
 Mute councillors, yet at each season speaking
 Alike to all, if good or ill betide—
 To take advantage, no occasion seeking.
 Strangers to pedantry, deceit, and pride,
 Reaching for “ready,” no warm hand extending,
 But when obtained no recognition sending.
 Like men I’ve met, how mean a thing is man,
 Whose friendship ends with cash, as it with cash began;
 That wretch is rich: off hat and bend the knee,
 Nor heed what numbers he has doomed to sorrow;
 Disaster strikes—like lightning-riven tree—
 New golden calf must be set up to-morrow.

Oh! ye full graduates in the world’s hard school,
 Who thought it round or flat, but find it hollow;
 Who mourn the absence of the golden rule,
 And grieve that evil deeds for good doth follow,

Know here are friends that never will “go back”
 Upon earth’s traveler, whether saint or sinner;
 One hundred cents each dollar, and no lack,
 Here “bank” your cash and time, and be big winner.

Sure bank in which no preying president
 Will falsify the books to cover stealing;
 No cashier’s steps from it will ere be bent,
 In haste, to Canada to shun false dealing.

No fraud-assisting manager with face
 Too sanctimonious to be wreathed with laughter,
 Will rake the “jack pot” with an unctious grace,
 Winning earth’s curses, and fierce flames hereafter.

No imbecile directory ignoring
 Their sacred duty, plunder will permit;
 No bunco dudes, loud hallelujahs pouring,
 Will honest earnings steal, and thank the Lord for it.

Oh! righteous Heaven! why let thy thunder sleep,
 While knaves thy livery* steal to rob mankind;
 They've sowed the storm, the whirlwind they will reap,
 In that dread day when all will justice find.

* * * * *

"Reading a full man makes," says Francis Bacon,
 Who gives to works of worth his precious time;
 But many men, or I am much mistaken,
 Get jolly full who read nor prose nor rhyme.

* * * * *

Whipped in the deal, go prices up or down,
 Melting your margins like untimely frost,
 A solace sure to soothe misfortune's frown;
 Margins on books, no changes can exhaust.

What says the Bible? hast thou never read it?
 Riches take wings, and vanish ere the morrow,
 But books remain, and many a sage hath said it,
 Augmenting pleasure, and abridging sorrow.

Ye men of letters who do business here,
 Bankers and brokers, clerks and traders all,
 Know that a mammoth stock of books is near,
 To suit each varied taste, and prices small.

Dost travels read, or history, poetry, novels?
 Swell the glad song, or commune in the cloister,
 Some in proud castles wrote, and some in hovels,
 Dost rare and racy like? then I'm your oyster.

* Stole the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in.—Pollok.

The store is handy, close where shadows lie,
 Thrown by exchanges, that proud pierce the sky,
 And where gay brokers who are hard to euchre,
 Have a sure corner on the filthy lucre.

A short time ago two men stopped at the door and asked if I had any books below, to which I replied: "Yes, come down;" after surveying the premises, and when going upstairs, I overheard one say to his companion:

"It beats h—ll what piles of good books that old b—gg—r's got down in that cellar." He was an observing man and spoke the words of "truth and soberness," but great as is the stock I want to wind up the folly in the spring.

For come first of May, if my brain-box is level,
 But as to that question I'm scarcely agreed,
 Beaver Street for all me can go straight to the d—l,
 And I'll seek some region where natives can read.

Had Cain kept book store in a street like this,
 He were not doomed to roam,
 God would have thought full punishment were his,
 To strive, yet starve at home.

"All comes to him who waits," you say,
 And quote a well-known line;
 Methinks if long I linger here,
 The poorhouse will be mine.

This, a rehash, as many of you know,
 With here and there an added line to show
 To what extent in folly I can go.

“When this you see, remember me.”

“Christmas comes but once a year,
 And when it comes it brings good cheer”—
 To some folks.

Of all the presents you can give or send,
 Unto a near by, or a distant friend,
 Books are the best, in either prose or rhyme.
 To keep remembrance green at Christmas time,
 Hail, holy season, when each human heart
 Should open wide, and act the noblest part,
 And over all the world should wander free
 The streams of love and Christian charity.
 When family greetings make the homestead hearth,
 That thornless rose, the sweetest spot on earth;
 The homestead hearth, ah, me! what thoughts arise,
 As memory brings the past before mine eyes,
 With its long train of pleasures fondly stored,
 When love prevailed, and plenty crowned the board,
 When to all poor the gates were opened wide,
 And the old leanto latchstring hung outside!
 Alas! how many doomed by fate to roam,
 Wide o'er the world, from all the joys of home,
 Fat with good Xmas cheer, must feed contented—
 God bless the Christian who free lunch invented—
 In this connection it may not be wrong,
 If to this length you've followed in my song,
 To wish to all my friends, both far and near,
 Five hundred cents to the dollar of good cheer,
 I wish e'en more, for oh! how wondrous few
 Friends of our sunshine in the storm prove true

The store is ninety feet deep, and there is not, and never was on the broad side of America, any book store carrying to the square inch such ponderous piles of books in almost every department of literature and language, including some fine specimens of incunabula and other literary treasures; "from grave to gay, from sacred to profane," suitable for "all sorts and conditions of men," women, and children.

To meander through them is a course of instruction,
To study their contents a liberal education.

Man cannot live by bread alone, 'tis writ.*
Say! in what volume would you look for it?
Nor can the daily press, and none are better,
Fill out the contract to the very letter.
For those whose minds would fatten on the pages
Of poets, orators, novelists, and sages.

Such books I have piled solid from the floor,
At the Hardscrabble "well found," cheap book store;
Four hundred years have passed since some had birth,
And books to charm the angels of the earth.
Wisdom and wit in many a varied dress.
Cheap as the cheapest candor must confess,
From Pilgrim's Progress to Decameron,
To please each father, mother, daughter, son;
But yet to name each varied volume o'er,
Were task like counting sands along the shore,
Or all the dews that jewel early morn,
Or on the Western plains the tasseled corn.
Variety's the spice of life, 'tis said†
And that's the card that places me ahead.
But though I cannot give each book its due,
The following lines present a partial view,
From which to gather as each fancy leans:

* Deuteronomy, viii. 3.

† Cowper.

Histories, novels, sermons, magazines,
 Travels on land, and wanderings o'er the wave,
 Where many a hero finds an early grave;
 Books of high worth, ancient and modern art,
 Books to inform the brain, and mend the heart,
 Books to direct the enquiring mind to truth,
 And tender poetry for love-sick youth.
 By all the long-haired lunatics who've sung,
 Starving in garrets since old Time was young,
 "Rich, rare, and racy, too, like Paddy's cheese,"
 And books pictorial, juveniles to please;
 Music, and mirth to lighten daily cares,
 And words of comfort for the snowy hairs;
 Encyclopedias, dictionaries show,
 If person, place, or thing you wish to know,
 Bibles which read and followed to the letter,
 Will make bad people good, good people better;
 Albums to keep where'er your footsteps roam,
 The form and features of the loved at home.
 With books to cure "all ills that flesh is heir to,"
 All the above with conscience clear can swear to,
 While volumes not in stock I can supply,
 Which fact please keep beneath your "weather eye;"
 And as for bargains half can ne'er be told,
 While "I'm on deck," prices in lower hold.
 Here grave and gay in sweet communion mingle,
 Tasso, for 25—50 McFingal,*
 While in one section nestle side by side
 The life of Washington,† and Milton's pride;
 Here for a quarter you can read the story
 How Gen. Grant did climb the heights to glory;
 Lives, Dickens, † Thackeray, Beaconsfield, Tilden;
 Blaine

* America's great Hudibrastic epic, too little known and read.

† Life of Washington, 50c. to \$5; Milton, 50c. to \$1.50.

‡ Dickens, 20c.; Thackeray and Beaconsfield, 15c. each; Tilden and Blaine, morocco, \$1.

Pride of his country, famous son of Maine.
 Six hundred volumes at half price are sold.
 That charming book, "Canadians" * of old.
 Twelve thousand † juveniles, and ne'er were seen
 A prettier lot. Oh! is there one so mean,
 Who would not please his darlings? each page a roar,
 For price and style unmatched in any store;
 Call and behold the fine display they make,
 For like your own sweet children, "yank the cake."
 Cruise of the Montauk, over waves high swelling,
 No more delightful book, at half price selling;
 Would take a turn in Wall street, and not rue it,
 Then Clews' book will tell you how to do it—
 Loaded with Wall street memories every page,
 While long experience gives him to presage.
 Count Grammont's Memoirs, Rabelais appear,
 Jeff Davis' life, and Stonewall Jackson's here;
 Last, scarce, and out of print, by Esten Cooke;
 And on a shelf beside the Magic book;
 And would your thoughts to noble actions lead,
 Then high-toned temperance tales by Arthur read,
 Three for a dollar, were a dollar each;
 Longfellow's great prose poems now in reach,
 At recent sale big bids for them were thrown, ‡
 While here for fifty cents they are your own.
 Pen pictures of New Yorkers known to fame,
 Perhaps among the number stands your name;
 Rise of the family of that railroad king,
 Cornelius Vanderbilt; who in the ring
 Of railroad running, knocked all others out,
 And sent them howling up financial "spout;"

* 25c., were 50c.

† From 10c. to \$1. I am amazed that the men here, as a general thing, do not buy books to please their children, when they can get them for the price of a glass of whisky. Perhaps, however, they have no children—at home.

‡ Outre Mer, 1st edition, \$35; Hyperion, \$16.

Life of Jay Gould:* his course it doth declare
 From hayseed youth, to multi-millionaire.
 Detective stories; and Confederate spy;
 With Talmadge† sermons pointing to the sky;
 Queen Margaret's‡ tales; immortal Fielding's§ story,
 Of all romances, his the pride, and glory;
 Stories of great New York in early years
 On Mrs. Lamb's historic page appears,
 And all should have a copy, old and young,
 To learn the source from whence her greatness sprung.
 Some forty views bring back the days of old,
 And with a graphic pen the tales are told;
 When Father George was first inaugurated,
 All for a quarter, let this truth be stated;
 Old merchants of New York, "brave days of old,"
 Where from, and who, and how, made "stacks" of gold,
 To them for facts, few books "can hold a candle,"
 And interesting as a social scandal;
 Sayings of "Uncle Rufus" for a dime,
 Who made things rattle in his golden prime.
 Is life worth living?|| Yes, will be your cry,
 If at my famous store, good books you buy;
 Sweet Fanny Fern, and here behold the joy,
 That Bill Nye's chestnuts give to Peck's bad boy.
 Speak charming William speak, O tell me true,
 Are forty liars all you ever knew?
 The Lime Kiln Club, faith Gardner is the boss 'un,
 And Eli Perkins knocked out by Munchausen;
 Here Simms doth picture with his graphic pen
 The lives of maidens, combats of brave men,
 Wild Indian tales, the lasso, and the leap,
 Sea stories, wanderings o'er the mighty deep;
 With many a holy book within your reach,

* Illustrated, 15c.

† Detective stories, and sermons by Talmadge, 10c.

‡ Heptameron, bound, 75c.

§ Tom Jones, illustrated, 50c.

|| This, and following, 35c. each; three for \$1; pub., \$1.

If any wish to pray, or wish to preach,
And if your future state awakens doubt,
Come buy a book, nor chances take without;
Hervey among the tombs—not Tombs, we know,
Where many have been sent, and more should go;
Here let me mention I could name a few
Who surely would be there, if got their due;
Eliot and Black, if to romance inclined;
Carlyle the cynic, but with giant mind;
Bulwer and Thackeray, names that will not die,
Around the store in rich profusion lie;
Dickens complete, four-dollars, books fifteen,
And for the money better ne'er was seen;
The same for Waverley, nor be forgot
The great creations of Sir Walter Scott;
While for ten cents in cellar can be found
Five thousand, last two authors, paper bound;
With fifty thousand others, five and ten,
When can we look upon their like again.
With fifty thousand bound all snugly stored,
Bought by the acre, sell them by the cord;
But time would fail to tell each honored name,
Crowned with the laurels of enduring fame;
Heaven in its kindness hath profusely sent
To gem the literary firmament,
Whose brain inventive, and whose brilliant mind
Cheer the dull hours and elevate mankind.
Ye men of Wall street, to my tale give heed,
For I am told that many of you read.
Ye money bags; ye specie vaults; who hold
The country's railroads, and the country's gold;
Come from that maelstrom where but worthless trash
You often give for honest, hard-earned cash;
Come from false statements and the secret lair,
The trap, the pitfall, and the fatal snare;
Come from that home of irrigated stock
The quicksands, quagmire, and the sunken rock;
Come from your ignorance of trash you sell,

Or from the many falsehoods that you tell;
 Come from that street which every one doth quit,
 With red-hot curses heaped on you and it;
 Come from your desks where you in secret wrought,
 And money took for stocks you never bought;
 Come from your boasted friendship; bogus deal,
 Your knowing perjury, and your knowing steal;
 Come from your offices of guilt, and find
 Books to instruct, and elevate the mind—
 All have their mission in this world of pain;
 'Tis yours to *fat* the pocket, mine the brain,
 Results how different, candor bids me tell:
 Yours is the oyster, mine, alas! the shell.
 But yet a solace and reward I find,
 Knowing how much I benefit mankind;
 When Wall street sinks, remembered but in story,
 Letters will live in all their strength and glory.*
 Give jewels, and this truth cannot be doubted,
 The baubles soon are with your "uncle" spouted,
 A brown-stone mansion and short space before
 The mortgagee will enter at the door.
 One gives a clock; O Lord, but men are thick
 Who like a timepiece always go on tick;
 This one a cane, how many backs were paining,
 If all were caned who do deserve a caning;
 Some boodle give, pursued by scorpion fate,
 How mighty quick cash doth evaporate;
 Another's gift is chiseled from a stone,
 Here a full image, there a bust is shown,
 Chiseling and chiseled, bust, and on a bust,
 Doth tell of man to-day, frail child of dust;
 One gives a hat, nor will it ever split,
 With all the brains that will be stored in it;
 Toys please awhile but scattered round the floor,
 The broken fragments will delight no more,
 Time wears a garment out, and you will find

* While, if reports are true this applies to some, there are, no doubt, hundreds to whom it does not apply.

With the reminder gone, you're out of mind;
 Loud ring your praises while the wine foams high,
 But all forgotten when the stream runs dry,
 But good books given will forever keep
 Your memory green as down life's stream you sweep
 Perennial fount of joy on every page,
 A charm to youth, a comfort to old age.
 The store is handy, bend your willing feet
 To No. 27, in Beaver Street,
 And buy your books for reading or presenting,
 And be assured you'll not go forth lamenting,
 Oh! let me give your coin one fond caress,
 All books delivered free—*jackass** express.
 Those who go down to the "sea in ships" will find,
 The books right here to suit their cultured mind,
 And every one can choose from stock prodigious,
 Books that are sure to please the most fastidious;
 While modesty forbids, come weal or woe,
 That blooming idiot his own horn should blow,
 Yet on acquaintance your glad eyes will see,
 For selling books there are no "flies" on me.
 Then hither haste, I'll treat you like a brother,
 The store examine and you'll seek no other;
 Survey the shelves, that with book treasures groan,
 And if the prices suit make them your own;
 But should you buy or not, untrammelled still,
 Free as the air your own imperial will:
 Give earnest ear to truths I'm now inditing,
 Call oft and early on

Yours,
 WM. I. WHITING.

* To prevent mistakes I make a personal delivery.

P. S.

Permit me here to state this holy show,
 Was billed to open some six months ago,
 But printers' bills are cash, and when they say
 "Please can your reverence ante up to-day?"
 'Tis no avail to cry in words uncivil,
 If cash is "scace," "meander to the devil;"
 On others you can fling it piping hot,
 But heard by printers oft appals them not;
 Hence the delay, and 'tis my view there be
Acres of people who can feel for me.

W. I. W.

To each book, and each life there doth come a last page,
 Whatever its length, or whatever its age,
 And if there are beauties in contents or cover,
 Or filled full of blemishes, all is soon over;
 To you who have followed, and you who have not—
 That is, provided your quarter I've got—
 My best thanks and wishes, this season of "holly,"
 I have your money and you have my folly;
 Then say, noble Christians, which one is the winner,
 I with each quarter can get a square dinner,
 You've but the consciousness of a good deed
 By helping an outcast in his direst need,
 Whose chief joy from now will be down his throat,
 crammin',
 Good victuals to make up for five years of famine.
 Now ring down the curtain; here endeth the writing,
 Of yours in sincerity,

W. I. WHITING.

27 Beaver Street, New York, }
 December, 1894. }

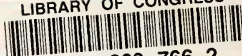








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